



# ***The World of the Private Investigator***

Congratulations on your decision to start a new adventure – learning about the world of private investigation. Today, this field is rapidly expanding, and opportunities for employment, advancement and agency ownership are plentiful. With the knowledge and skills learned from the DTI course and its supplemental materials, you can be on your way to a rewarding, lucrative career.

Starting now, you will be learning the varied, exciting skills and techniques that professional investigators must know to do their jobs effectively and ethically. But before you

can fully understand the lessons presented throughout this course, you will need to know something about the World of the Private Investigator. So this starting point – the first lesson – covers many important topics that serve as an introduction and overview to your new career as a private investigator. By providing some basic definitions and explanations of the various types of investigators, then moving to an assessment of your skills and interests, this lesson helps you get started on a most rewarding learning adventure.

As you read this lesson, prepare to answer the following questions:

1. What are the five major types of investigators practicing in today's investigative marketplace?
2. What is the formal definition of "private investigator"?
3. Why are ethics and professional conduct important, and how can investigators avoid abusing their power?
4. What dangers and risks do private investigators face?
5. When do private investigators carry guns?
6. What new roles do women play in private investigations, and why are their services valued?
7. What attributes and skills contribute to the success of the private investigator?
8. How are investigative achievements and experience recognized?
9. What terms are applicable to private investigation?
10. How can you determine your investigative interests and make maximum use of your skills and talents in the investigation profession?
11. What is the common denominator in all areas of private investigation?



## Introduction

Private investigation is an easy profession to get into at any age, and it is a career that can be fulfilling, meaningful and a good fit for the natural talent and personality of people at all stages of career development. The young and inexperienced most probably will start out as field investigators, working in a detective agency and spending most of their time conducting surveillance.

Successful newcomers bring tremendous energy into their work and find that the work suits their personality so well that it often feels more like play. They combine luck with common sense and "street smarts" to get results. They get plenty of practice thinking on their feet, looking over their shoulders, and coming up with fast answers if "caught in the middle of something." Hard work and persistence will be rewarded with many years of challenging work and the ability to handle the many career transitions that lead to success and financial security.

Middle-aged individuals making a career change or returning to the job market will find private investigation an ideal next profession. The most successful of these will have cultivated a genuine interest in people and the problems and motivations that come to bear on their lives. Because of their life experiences and maturity, they are able to deal with varying, often unpredictable circumstances.

Being able to do what comes naturally, and what you are good at, is essential in the success of investigators. Middle-aged individuals recognize their strengths and preferences because of their varied experiences, and often they are able to more easily identify and pursue the



types of investigation that suit them. Since investigation work is so varied, they can focus on work that fits their unique mental and physical abilities.

A third common group of new investigators comprises former law-enforcement officials, and these professionals make the transition easily. The biggest difficulty they usually have is adjusting to new investigative formats for the variety of civil and business investigations that were not part of their previous responsibilities. They bring with them their cultivated "official" demeanor

*Private investigation is a profession for men and women of all ages, at any stage in their career development. To be successful at it, you must be properly trained and know how to apply proper procedures and investigative techniques.*

and find new challenges in running their own detective agencies as a business, as opposed to being a civil-service employee.



*Surveillance and photography are two exciting activities used extensively in almost all aspects of private investigation.*

training, although the latter can be helpful. Success requires learning the proper procedures and applying the right investigative technique to each situation. That's the knowledge this course provides you, in full, along with how to perform your duties in an ethical and legal manner. By taking DTI's training course, you will learn to operate at the highest ethical level, which is necessary to function as a qualified and professional investigator. Just follow the Road Maps throughout your course and you will find your lessons interesting and very informative.

This first lesson begins by defining and describing the five categories of private investigators in today's profession. We then discuss issues of ethics and professional conduct as they relate to the private investigator. In describing different types of private investigators, we place great emphasis on maintaining a high level of integrity and character. We go on to explore the dangers and risks in private investigation and the issues related to the carrying of guns.

For people in any of the three categories, learning private investigation does not require a college education or formal law-enforcement

Following that is a consideration of the certification programs available and other means to increase your professional standing. Then, we discuss the expanded opportunities for women in private investigation and the attributes of investigators who perform well. Finally, we review the terms applicable to private investigation and offer guidance on making the most of your talents by determining your investigative interest.

As you will see as you move through the course, you will develop penetrating insight and intelligent judgment that can lead to ethical and successful investigations. That's an exciting combination, making the profession well worth your time and effort. So, without further delay, let's begin!

### **Types of Investigators**

Before we formally define the term *private investigator* and discuss his duties, let's take a look at the types of investigators in practice today. This overview allows a perspective on the tremendous variety of work assignments available. Five major types are discussed here. Note that some investigative tasks may overlap, yet each type of investigation serves a unique purpose.

1. **General Investigator** – This investigator has a multitude of clients – small businesses, corporations, retail establishments and individuals. The many and varied services include locating missing persons, pre-employment background checks, internal theft investigations, undercover investigations, surveillance, process serving and

electronic-security countermeasures. No list of assignments can exhaust all possibilities; new situations requiring new approaches develop constantly. The variability springs from the nature of human need and from the conflicts and complexities of our changing society.

2. **Legal Investigators** – This investigator is usually employed by law firms handling mostly personal-injury cases. A legal investigator's responsibility involves accumulating and assembling facts so an attorney can intelligently apply the law in the best interests of his client. A legal investigator mainly interviews prospective witnesses and experts expected to be used in the litigation. They also search out testimonial, documentary and physical evidence. In defense of persons accused of a crime, the legal investigator protects the constitutional rights of the accused.  
Finally, legal investigators frequently testify in court. The nature of legal investigations varies considerably with the area of law involved. Negligence cases, for example, require a great deal of investigative work. Damaged vehicles, defective machines, and injured persons all have to

be examined. Witnesses have to be interviewed at length to determine the extent of negligence. In workers' compensation cases, negligence is not an issue, but the extent of injury is. Likewise, the extent to which an injury was work-related becomes an important aspect of the investigation. In probate, an investigation could involve either locating missing heirs or attempting to determine the mental state of the deceased at the time the



**Although there are five general categories of investigators, all practitioners share a common denominator: they collect information and facts.**

## The Meaning of “Forensic”

What is a forensic investigation? A forensic scientist? What are some examples?

If you have interests in becoming a legal investigator, you should know the meaning of *forensic* and how it applies to private investigation.

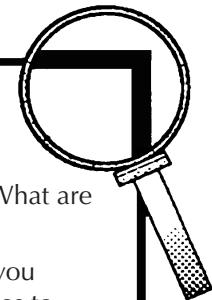
Forensic investigation is the application and interpretation of scientific tests applied to an array of physical evidence that can be debated or argued by each side in a court of law.

The forensic scientist or expert witness performs two primary functions: (1) the scientific function – collecting, testing and evaluating evidence, and forming an opinion as to that evidence; and (2) the forensic function – communicating and interpreting those findings and explaining in a court of law the methods used to reach those conclusions.

The investigator's role is to assist the expert or an attorney in gathering the evidence to be examined and to help with the trial preparation and testimony.

Categories of civil forensic investigations include environmental, engineering, accident reconstruction, medicine and health, agricultural, building construction, and forensic photography. Categories of criminal forensic investigations, where the investigator would help represent the defendant, include DNA reconstruction, questionable documents, case review and re-examination of evidence.

Many of the investigative techniques you will learn in your DTI course will better prepare you for identifying and collecting forensic evidence.



will was written. The underlying investigative skills in all areas are basically the same.

theft, falsified records, accidents, workers' compensation and lawsuits.



## LEGAL ADVISORY:

When private investigators identify themselves as "Investigator Smith" instead of "Private Investigator Smith," display a badge (now illegal to use) at a distance, or assert that they are conducting an investigation without first informing the person of the private nature of the investigation, their actions run dangerously close to impersonating a law-enforcement official. This is particularly risky since investigators

## Impersonating a Public Law Enforcement Official

always work in plain clothes. Investigators should always make sure they completely identify themselves to avoid any appearance of impersonating a public law-enforcement official. If the particulars of an operation are such that investigators cannot identify themselves, it is suggested that investigators do not display anything that may leave a person with a false impression of the investigators' true authority.

These investigators also develop and administer internal programs to investigate crimes such as pirating, theft of trade secrets and shoplifting. They also are responsible for minimizing losses from natural and man-made disasters. These investigators focus on general security functions common to most types of organizations, such as physical security, disaster planning, computer security, protecting proprietary information, fire prevention, and

terrorism prevention (homeland security). A new type of security investigator concentrates on specific concerns of specialized organizations such as at government installations, retailers, financial institutions, health-care facilities and energy firms.

### 3. **Insurance Investigators –**

These professionals either are employed directly by insurance companies or are subcontracted by them. Insurance investigators perform the same basic functions as legal investigators, but their goal is to defend the insurance companies against fraudulent claims. Their duties include investigating cases involving arson, product liability, workers' compensation and personal injury, as well as medical malpractice.

### 4. **Corporate Investigators and Industrial Security –**

Many large corporations and businesses hire from within their own security forces to investigate internal matters. The most common investigations involve pre-employment checks, internal

### 5. **Specialized Related Fields –**

Many investigators also perform auto repossessions, bounty hunting, bodyguard and security work, and all of these fields are related to private investigation. Many of the techniques used in these specialized related fields are the same as those used in primary private investigation. However, the range of skills needed and the actual fact-finding tasks are limited. Private investigators with interest in these areas usually work

in these specialized related fields as a secondary business through their main investigative business.

## Definitions of Private Investigators

We have already seen that the functions of investigation are many and multifaceted. Now, let's get a bit technical and nail down a formal definition. From its Latin derivative, *vestigare*, *investigation* implies a tracking, a search, an assimilation, or a collection of information and facts. This essential function is common to all types of investigations, regardless of their special purposes. The following definitions of two of the major types discussed above further amplify the general definition and provide more detail.

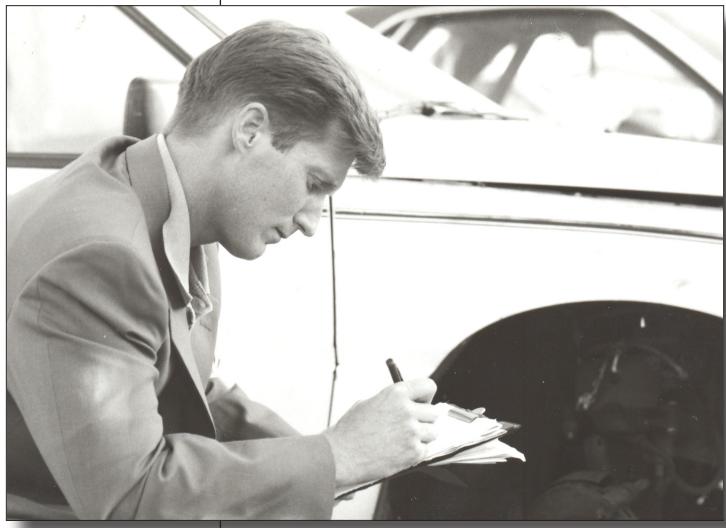
### General Investigator

Although each state defines *private investigator* differently, the statutes in many states have generally defined it as "any person who engages in the business of, or accepts employment to make, investigations to determine information of crimes or civil wrongs; the location, disposition, or recovery of stolen property; the cause of accidents, fires, damages or injury to persons or to property; or evidence to be used before any court, board, officer, or investigative committee."

*Private investigation* can also be defined as the process of fact assimilation. It is the systematic collection of evidence necessary to support or refute a claim, whether it is civil or criminal in nature. Private investigation is the process of observation, close inspection and analysis, as well as the continuous and regular inquiry into a specific subject. Private investigation is the search and journey toward the reconstruction of events and conditions pertinent to a client's needs and interest. It is the collection of information to resolve factual disputes and clarify confusing data. It can also be the supplying of independent pieces of information, such as names, addresses and place of employment (POE).

### 125,000 Private Investigators

It is estimated that there are at least 50,000 private-investigation agencies in the United States. Since an agency employs an average of 2.5 investigators each, this gives an estimated 125,000 private investigators in the United States. Your prospect of obtaining a position in a detective agency is good, especially after you become a DTI graduate.



Legal investigators are routinely assigned to reconstruct accident scenes or to determine the authenticity of claims.



**Private investigation involves responsibility. That means the ability to tell right from wrong, to think and act professionally, and to be accountable for your behavior.**

### Legal Investigator

Legal investigators are trained in techniques of fact-finding and forensic procedures (applying scientific and medical knowledge to legal matters for formal argumentation in law court). They are committed to the pursuit of truth because it is only by having verified facts at hand that an attorney can intelligently apply the law in the best interest of a client. As we saw earlier, the goal is to assemble as complete a factual picture of a situation as possible so that a case can be prepared for trial.

Legal investigations differ from general investigations in that they include the following uniform practices:

1. A logical investigative or procedural sequence must be followed.
2. Real, physical evidence must be legally obtained.
3. Real, physical evidence must be properly stored and preserved.

4. Witnesses must be identified, interviewed and prepared for any potential or actual litigation.
5. Reports and documentation must be collected.
6. Information must be accurately and completely recorded.
7. Evidence collected must correlate to the claim, the cause of action, or the offense charged.

### Ethics and Professional Conduct

To avoid unlawful and reputation-endangering activities, private investigators need strong professional ethics for guidance. They must always comply with the law and professional standards of conduct, especially today when private investigators frequently make the headlines for illegal and unethical conduct. Professional investigators carry with them special investigative abilities that ordinary citizens do not have. They have the legal

*As a private investigator, you will develop skill in interviewing and interrogation that will elicit precise, relevant information from people, even when their admission is made against their self-interest.*



right to determine a person's background, current employment, unlisted telephone number, financial status, etc. With these abilities comes the obligation to adhere to strong ethical and professional-conduct standards. Failure to do so subjects an investigator to potential legal prosecution and license revocation.

The areas in which investigators most frequently violate ethical and legal guidelines are:

- Privacy and confidentiality issues
- Bending the laws to further an investigation

Clients need to trust that you are using lawful and acceptable techniques to handle their investigation competently, and that you both fully understand and agree on the end goals. You do have discretion, however, in deciding how to pursue an investigation and therefore are not required to inform your clients how you perform your work or where you get your information.

To keep abreast of the latest ethical and legal updates, refer to the Legal Advisories throughout your course.

### Danger and Risks in Private Investigation

Some activities of private investigation have no inherent danger or risk. These include searching public records, pre-trial preparation for civil actions, computer-crime investigations, etc. But, many other aspects do involve danger and risk, and there are two types of danger: expected and unexpected. Investigators can anticipate a high probability

of danger during activities such as criminal investigation, employee theft investigation, undercover investigation, process serving, marital investigations, surveillance, and bodyguard work. Examples of unexpected danger include an ambush or assault without warning or prior indication.



You can be unethical without breaking the law.

## Pushing the Limits of the Law

During complex investigations, you might sense blurred or conflicting legalities and unknowingly break the law, which could lead to arrest and license revocation. So, how do you know when this risk is present? Here is a good rule

to follow: If you experience uneasiness that your efforts are pushing the limits of the law, you are in all probability correct. Therefore, stop the activity immediately. All your efforts should be legal, ethical and honorable.



Acting ethically in private investigation means conforming to the standards of the profession. Displaying integrity means upholding moral principles of uprightness, honesty and sincerity.

Risk, on the other hand, is the voluntary taking of a dangerous chance. For example, an investigator on surveillance takes the risk of running a red light because he does not want to lose the subject. Risk in this case is taken under conditions of uncertainty (possible auto collision), which exposes the investigator to possible loss in order to reach a desired outcome (maintaining surveillance on the subject). So why do investigators take risk? Investigators take risks because they strive for some benefit or professional compensation.

Additionally, from the psychological standpoint, the exposure to risk and danger appeals to many individuals. Many private investigators, just as some professionals in law enforcement, get much satisfaction from knowing that



*New and inexperienced investigators often believe "authority" means carrying a gun and badge and giving intimidating commands. Experienced investigators, however, know that authority and influence result from knowledge, self-assurance and expertise.*

they face constant danger. However, it is not the actual harm or danger they value, but the heightened intensity that comes from the exposure to danger and the added challenge of keeping it from happening. In other words, many investigators thrive on the adrenaline rush. Those who enjoy the risks and dangers of private investigation do not envision themselves as taking outrageous chances. Rather, they prefer to see danger as an intense stimulant that can help them overcome challenging assignments.

### **Carrying a Gun**

As a general rule, private investigators do not carry guns. Movies and TV detective series feed on fantasies of private eyes that pack guns and beat the truth out of the bad guys. This is far from the truth. The private investigator's work consists of cases that do not involve street arrests or dealing with violent criminals. That job belongs to the police. However, in

*Private investigators often make arrests during business investigations in areas such as internal theft, embezzlement and fraud. Thus, investigators must know arrest tactics and handcuffing techniques.*



some circumstances, private investigators do need to carry guns, and only after obtaining a weapons permit from their local sheriff's departments. These circumstances include bodyguard assignments, when protecting evidence, organized-crime cases, or when there is a direct threat on an investigator's life.

There are some distinct drawbacks to carrying a gun. From a psychological standpoint, carrying a gun can give a private investigator a distorted sense of power. The transformation from an anonymous civilian to a private investigator can create the illusion of power and superiority, which can have a profound impact on the investigator's self-concept. Some may mistakenly regard themselves more capable, stronger and smarter than others. Further, carrying a gun can fulfill childhood fantasies of omnipotence or having unlimited power.

Such feelings can become addictive, since power and authority are important vehicles to pleasure. Eventually, a private investigator may not be able to resist this addiction. After all, the opposite feelings are powerlessness and fear, which reinforce the need to carry a weapon. But, the well-balanced private investigator is aware of this power temptation and balances it with good judgment, emotional maturity and moderation, finding no need to carry a gun except in certain situations.

## Women in Private Investigation

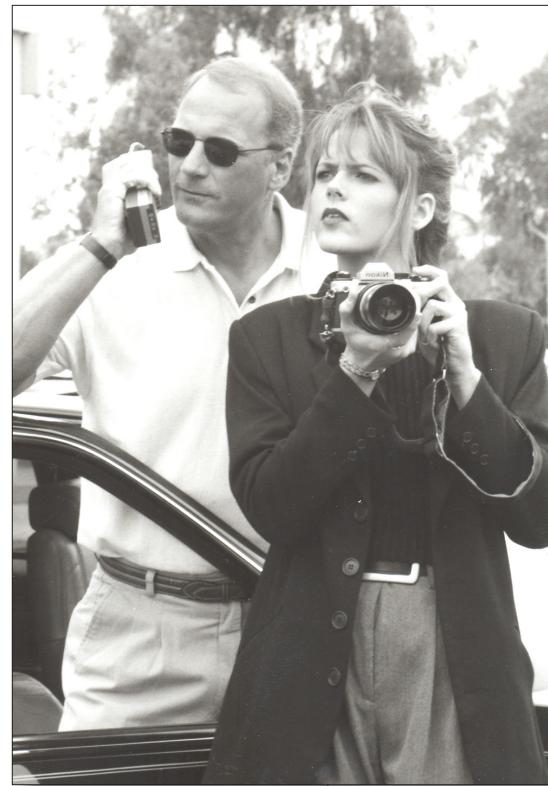
The private-investigation profession may have been marked as a man's domain in the past, but that is beginning to change. The number of women in the field, while still substantially smaller than the number of men, is rising rapidly.

The days of the tough, ex-cop keeping bourbon in the desk drawer and carrying a .45-caliber gun are over. Today, *data detectives* are becoming far more prevalent than the traditional tough, two-fisted PI. Women do an exceptional job researching court documents, using computers, gathering data, etc. Women are also effective as *people detectives*, for which skills are very much in demand. They do an exemplary job of interviewing clients and thus have a much better chance of obtaining information from people than do their male counterparts.

People are usually suspicious and apprehensive of a male investigator, but when they interact with a female investigator, they don't feel as threatened. People also tend to relax when a woman is on the phone. It is much easier for a woman to use a telephone pretext for obtaining information than it is for her male counterpart. Even on surveillance, a female investigator is less likely to arouse suspicion or apprehension in a subject. This is especially true when the subject is a woman who frequently fears the possibility of being stalked or assaulted by a man. Even when a female investigator follows a male subject, the subject is less likely to become suspicious of her presence. This increases the probability of success.

If you are a male trainee who plans to start your own agency, DTI recommends teaming up with a female agent, wife, girlfriend or associate. You will have a much higher chance of success as a male/female team than if you work individually or in an all-male environment. If you are a female and training to become an investigator, your opportunities are unlimited. You can easily get a job in a detective agency or work easily with a male counterpart as a two-person team, especially after becoming a DTI graduate.

Many medium-size detective agencies tend to hire more women today than they did in the past. Agencies find that women are more dedicated and conscientious. In one detective agency, for example, for every 12 investigators hired, 8 are women.



*Male-female detective teams have a much higher success rate than all-made teams because of the diverse skills each bring to the effort.*



*Women who participate in this traditionally male career are now greatly valued because of their increased ability to handle diverse assignments.*

### Private Investigators Who Perform Well

Many studies have uncovered the personal attributes and professional skills necessary for PI success. The results provide a mechanism for measuring traits that can help you evaluate yourself at any point in your career. By reviewing the following list, you can start to measure your current strengths and weaknesses in comparison to successful investigators. Here's what you should look for in yourself, now or at any point in your career:

### What Are “Gut Feelings”?

Ever wonder how some investigators solve cases with little proof or evidence? They seem to know the truth about a person or situation that isn't apparent to others? It's called “gut feelings” or intuition. So what are gut feelings?

A gut feeling is merely a judgment that has come to the surface with spontaneity. It can also be called a cognitive experience, an educated guess, speculation, inference, conjecture, extrasensory perception, etc. Frequently, it is a vague, hazy sense of direction. This does not make it necessarily less valuable, only more difficult to evaluate.

Gut feelings do not have a logical sequence; they leap across chasms of missing information, make sideways detours, and bring together unusual, even illogical combinations. Gut feelings have no restrictions; they are a product of the mind's capacity to do many things at once without being aware of them.

But gut feelings have their shortcomings, too. They suggest a conclusion without total evaluation of all variable factors. And, if a situation is not within the limits of previous experiences, then a gut feeling can be risky in some situations.

- **Legal and ethical awareness:** Can you recognize the many shades of gray that surround ethical and legal issues while conducting investigations? Can you identify the core ethical, legal and permissible acts? Can you develop the best and most ethical investigative technique when conducting investigations?
- **Avoiding temptation and corruption (integrity):** Can you say “no” to offering a bribe for information? Can you avoid an emotional involvement with a client?
- **Open-mindedness:** In discussions, do you listen carefully to every viewpoint, evaluating each perspective carefully and fairly? Can you imagine another person's world and upbringing and put yourself in his or her shoes and then view the current situation from that perspective?
- **Creativity:** Do you recognize that there are often several solutions to solving problems or conducting investigations? Can you break out of established patterns of conducting investigation and approach situations from innovative directions? Do you have the ability to role-play or conduct legal pretexts?
- **Knowledge and objectivity:** When you offer an opinion, is it always based on facts or evidence? On the other hand, if you lack knowledge of the subject or issue, can you recognize and account for this deficiency?
- **Curiosity:** Do you conduct investigations with probing questions

that penetrate beneath the surface of issues instead of being satisfied with superficial explanations or mistruths?

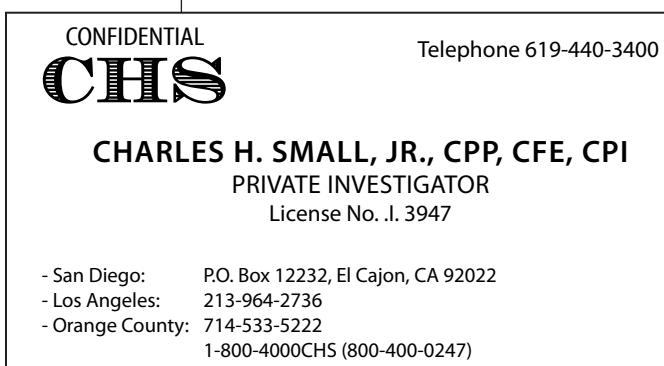
- **Independent thinking:** Are you afraid to disagree with your client, attorney or other investigator's opinion? Do you develop well-supported beliefs through in-depth analysis instead of uncritically borrowing the beliefs of others or simply going along with the crowd?
- **Discussion skills:** Are you able to discuss ideas or explain investigations in an organized and intelligent way? Even when the issues are controversial, do you listen carefully to opposing viewpoints and respond thoughtfully?
- **Self-awareness:** Are you aware of your own biases, and are you quick to point them out and factor them into consideration when analyzing a situation?
  - **Passion:** Do you have a passion for knowledge, and are you always striving to see issues and problems with more clarity? Do you have a burning desire to learn and become a private investigator? Have you always thought that you would make a good PI?

No doubt you saw a lot of yourself in some items and considerably less in others. This is expected in most potential investigators. Your strengths will give you an advantage immediately.

Your weaknesses can easily be overcome with study and practice. That's what this course is all about.

### Certification

Private investigation, like other professions, has levels of achievement and recognition based upon experience. This achievement is recognized through certification sponsored by state and national PI associations (not by state licensing bureaus) with the primary purpose of establishing professionally recognized standards. Certification provides special recognition of performance and investigative skill development that attests to years of experience and success as a private investigator.



Licensing and certification merely establish your credentials at the state level. However, specialized training can make your services more valuable – and marketable – to new employers and clients.

The illustration shows a business card of a private investigator operating in California. Notice, after his name are the initials "CPP, CFE, CPI." These stand for "American Society for Industrial Security," "National Association of Fraud Examiners," and "Certified Professional Investigator." There are 12 to 15 professional certification programs available to experienced investigators as they proceed through their careers.



*Initially, an assignment is like a mystery; it excites curiosity because it is unexplained, unknown or secret. It requires ingenuity that results in gradual discovery and, ultimately, a solution.*

The requirements for certification vary from program to program. Generally, the investigator must have two years' experience as a full-time investigator. The programs require written and oral examination. Some require completion of an accredited college, school or training program, such as DTI. Other certification programs require that you prepare a paper of at least 1,000 words on any investigative subject.

### **Terms Applicable to Private Investigation**

The following terms are used throughout your course. These terms are specifically relevant to the aspects of conducting work or assignments.

#### **Skill**

In this course you will develop many new skills that will increase your ability to investigate a wide range of cases. Skills are abilities or competencies you

*Investigators acquire expertise by continually confronting new situations to which they must apply skills they already possess.*

develop as a result of training, experience and/or education.

### **Investigative Technique**

Investigative technique is the process of combining investigative skills in carrying out an assignment. Some investigations require only one investigative technique, such as simple surveillance, while other assignments require multiple and more-complex techniques. An example would be conducting a moving vehicle surveillance, then using covert video and photography to document the incident, and completing the investigation by conducting an interview.

### **Procedural Steps**

Many assignments, such as legal investigations, insurance investigations, missing person's investigations, and fraud investigations, require a particular



course of action or sequential, established steps to follow in completing the assignment. The procedural steps may require using skill, investigative techniques, knowledge, or a combination of all three.

Many investigations are inherently complex. Some procedural steps cannot be executed until other steps have first been completed, but some can be carried out in parallel. If the procedures are out of sync with each other, the whole investigation may be jeopardized. Pay particular attention to the procedural steps outlined in your training course. This is the backbone of learning how to conduct investigations.

### Assignments – Also Known as Investigations or Cases

The whole investigative assignment process begins when a client has a need to fulfill. The need may be to investigate an internal theft, conduct a background check, find a missing person, or locate hidden assets.

Assignments are directed at achieving specific results. They can be simple when they entail only one activity, or complex when they entail many related activities. An assignment is a system – that is, a whole made up of interrelated parts, or procedural steps. Assignments are undertaken over a finite period of time. They are temporary. They have a reasonably well-defined beginning, middle and end. When the assignment's goals are achieved, the assignment

ends. While many assignments may be similar, each is, to a degree, a one-of-a-kind undertaking.

### Talent

Investigative talents are natural capabilities – or appear to be. It's possible to describe one or another investigator

as having a talent for surveillance, or a "nose" for facts, or an uncanny ability to use equipment. In most cases, though, an investigator's natural talent is maximized through learning and practice.

You can maximize your talents by developing investigative skills around them. You will find that the more you use your talents, the easier your work will be. A major obstacle to developing your talents is unnecessarily struggling through every case in the false belief that you are the only one having this difficulty.

You can let go of the struggle by believing that the investigative problems you constantly face are the norm, are present in every detective agency, and are faced by every investigator.



A "clue" or a "lead" is a bit of information that gradually takes the investigator out of perplexity and into better clarity.

### Investigative Creativity

Investigators require creativity, imagination and flexibility in many investigations. While textbooks and courses offer many invaluable investigative techniques, successful investigators look beyond the textbooks and courses for ways to achieve results and satisfy clients. They combine practical knowledge, specialized equipment, and confidential techniques with inventiveness to obtain the factual picture about a situation, occurrence or person.



Information-gathering is at the heart of private investigation. Investigators get their information from three sources: people, records and physical evidence.

As you progress through your course, make note of your likes and dislikes and what skills seem to come easily to you. These are the ones that will naturally develop into talent and will eventually lead to expertise in that particular area of investigation.

## Art or Science?

Successful investigation involves a balance between two polar views: investigation as an art versus investigation as a science. If art and science are part of a continuum, where does the separation point lie? The answer depends on what aspect of private investigation is under consideration.

For example, surveillance, interviewing, telephone pretext and undercover work are all examples of investigation as an art requiring skills acquired through artful application of learned techniques. If you swing far to the other side, you'll employ physical and biological sciences in your work. This would include laboratory examination of evidence and traffic-accident reconstruction. Although the private investigation field is becoming more focused on academic study and research and is moving by degrees toward science (with forensic science exerting an increasing influence), the artful application of skill and creative investigative technique has, and always will be, a big part of private investigation.



to determine your likes and dislikes, as well as your strengths, weaknesses, talents and skills. Some students show talent in surveillance, following people and taking video. Others develop talent interviewing subjects, finding missing persons and skip-tracing. Many also like working for insurance companies, or investigating workers' comp cases, since the work is consistent and steady. Retired or former law-enforcement students like dealing with cases involving internal theft, drugs in the workplace, arson and fraud. These people make good witnesses since they have years of experience testifying in court. Or, you may enjoy working with attorneys in pre-trial preparation. This course will help you decide your own special interests and where you would most like to work – in a corporation, an insurance company, an investigative agency, or independently.

But, no matter in what area or combination of areas your strengths and interests lie, there is one unavoidable common denominator throughout the entire profession: Private investigators collect factual information. Without information, there are no cases, and there is no success. Investigators obtain information from three main sources – people, records and physical evidence. And they use a variety of investigative techniques, procedural steps, confidential sources and equipment to assist in information gathering. The process is fascinating, as the assembling of information ultimately leads to the successful conclusion of cases.

As you proceed through your DTI training, pay close attention to the



*DTI's training turns new investigators into fully functioning members of the PI profession faster and more thoroughly than any other known training method.*

## Determining Your Investigative Interests

As you proceed through your training, you will learn how to handle many different assignments. You will also be exposed to many investigative techniques, technological equipment and skills used by today's professionals. This exposure will give you a chance

“Records Used In...”. These are condensed outlines of the procedural steps for specific investigations. And, as you learn about procedural steps, investigative techniques and specialized equipment, ask yourself, “What information can be obtained using these methods?” By the end of your training, you will have developed professionally to the point where you can work very effectively as a private investigator. You will know how to obtain information on any incident, person, or past event by paying close attention to the techniques you learned in this course.

You are about to begin a most challenging, gratifying chapter in your professional life. We wish you good luck and look forward to the day when you can proudly say you have completed DTI’s training and are ready to begin your new career.

### **Review**

This first lesson has offered you a comprehensive overview of the investigative profession. You have been introduced to the types of private investigators and have learned the

differences between them. You have also learned about the high ethical standards and moral conduct expected of a private investigator. We especially emphasized maintaining a high level of integrity and character to avoid abusing power. You learned about the dangers and risks that are part of the investigative profession and how they often are a stimulus to some investigators. Issues concerning the possession of guns and examples of their potential use were discussed. The increasing prominence of women as investigators was explored, in addition to their increasing value to agencies and investigative teams. We then went on to discuss certification and its value in establishing your credentials, and we offered guidance on how you can advance professionally through credentials. We reviewed some key terms related to private investigation, and concluded with a brief discussion on determining your investigative interests.

If you believe you have mastered the instruction in this lesson, turn to the next page for the Progress Check.



*There is a clear relationship between being professionally trained and demonstrating competent performance on the job. Expect to be challenged in the coming lessons and enjoy the journey to the development of your investigative talents.*



## Progress Check

1. List the five major types of private investigators discussed in this lesson.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The formal definition of private investigator describes (or includes):

- a. One who solves cases.
- b. A tracking, search and assimilation of information and facts.
- c. A law-enforcement official.
- d. Use of high-tech equipment to gather information.

3. Name two areas in which investigators are most frequently at risk for violating ethical and legal guidelines:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_

4. List four investigative abilities than can give private investigators extraordinary power.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

5. As a private investigator reaches higher professional levels, he or she must exhibit higher level of ethics and professional conduct.

- True
- False

6. Private investigators face two general types of danger. They are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ dangers.

7. Which one of the following statements about private investigators and guns is true:
- a. Private investigators never carry guns.
  - b. Private investigators do not need permits for guns.
  - c. On special cases, such as bodyguard assignments, investigators carry guns.
  - d. Investigators use guns routinely because guns offer safety in all situations.
8. List three reasons why women are effective and increasingly accepted as investigators.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Private investigators must have good observation and memory skills, but do not need to be sensitive to people's feelings because they must be very blunt in order to get the truth.
- True     False
10. Private investigators seek certification in order to:
- a. Demonstrate that they have an academic degree.
  - b. Gain recognition for achievement and experience.
  - c. Further their study in specialized areas.
  - d. None of the above.
11. Briefly define each of the following terms:
- a. Skill \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Investigative Technique \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Assignments \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Procedural Steps \_\_\_\_\_
12. You can eliminate your investigative weaknesses and maximize your talents through training, practice and experience.
- True     False

Remember, DO NOT submit this Progress Check to DTI for grading. At the end of Lesson 5, you will be required to take the Study Unit 1 Examination and submit the Official Answer Sheet for grading.